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THE DUTCH BOERS

AND

SLAVERY

IN

THE TRANS-VAAL REPUBLIC,

IN A LETTER TO R. N. FOWLER, ESQ., M.P.,

BY F. W. CHESSON.

“It would not do to agree that negroes are men, lest it should appear that whites are not.”—*Montesquieu*.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Trans-Vaal Boers are a community not much known to the English people, and unfortunately they do not improve on acquaintance. The following pages are written with two objects; first, to show that the Boers send out commandoes to kill the Kaffir men, and to enslave the surviving women and children; and, secondly, to call attention to the fact, that, as they are building up this institution of slavery, in direct contravention of the Treaty of 1852, which forms the foundation of their independence, it is the duty of the British Government to enforce the prohibition of the nefarious traffic embodied in Article IV. of the Convention. It is the belief of those best qualified to form an opinion, that the moral influence of Great Britain will amply suffice to accomplish this beneficent end.

MEMORANDUM

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TO THE DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF REVENUE

FROM: [Illegible]

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

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THE DUTCH BOERS AND SLAVERY IN THE TRANS-VAAL REPUBLIC.

TO R. N. FOWLER, Esq., M.P., Treasurer of the Aborigines'
Protection Society.

MY DEAR SIR,—You brought the subject of the conduct and policy of the Dutch Boers towards the native tribes of South Africa under the notice of the members of the Aborigines' Protection Society, at the Annual Meeting, held at the London Tavern, in May last. This is my apology for addressing you on a question which is perhaps as important as any now claiming the attention of those who are interested in the colonies of Great Britain. I refer to the practice of slavery in the Trans-Vaal Republic,* to the violation of the treaty of 1852 which it involves, and to the external warfare and domestic tyranny of which it is the fruitful cause.

The two Republics of South Africa have a common origin, and, so far as their relations with the native races are concerned, a common history. The Dutch, in their own country, are the most peaceful and law-abiding of citizens; and those who have sat by their firesides in Holland find it difficult to understand why it is, that as colonists, they have ever been cruel and mercenary. It is true that in this respect they are not singular; for in the northern island of New Zealand, in the pastoral districts of Queensland, and in the border territories of North America, men of the English race have vied with the Boers of South Africa in their selfish or inhuman treatment of the Aborigines. But, to the honour of the British Government, its influence in the collisions which so often take place between colonists and natives is generally exercised on the side of justice and mercy. It has more than once prevented

* An inland state of S.-E. Africa, bounded south by the Vaal, a large tributary of the Orange River, north by the Limpopo, east by the Drakenberg Mountains, and west by the Bechuana tribe. Area, undefined. Length, 500 miles; breadth, 225 miles. — *Johnston's Gazetteer*.

the extermination of the Maories and the wholesale confiscation of their lands; and to it is due the non-recurrence, for a period of fifteen years, of a Kaffir war—that gulf into which Chancellors of the Exchequer once periodically cast their surplus. As the hands of the Imperial Government are now tolerably clean, there is no inconsistency in appealing to them against the misdeeds of the Boers of South Africa.

It may be alleged that this is a proposed interference with the internal government of an independent state. It is true that the Dutch Republics of South Africa have enjoyed a separate existence, in one case for fourteen and in the other for sixteen years past. In the interval they have been as much masters of their own affairs as if the English had disappeared from the Cape; but it is not the less a fact, that their independence is based upon treaties which impose upon them (as well as upon us) certain well-defined obligations. As these obligations are in themselves just and reasonable—as indeed the non-observance of them involves, as a consequence, the subversion of public morality—the lapse of sixteen or of sixty years cannot lessen their force, or diminish the weight of the responsibility they entail. England may fairly consider the expediency of enforcing the treaty which has been broken; but of her moral right to enforce it there cannot be the shadow of a doubt.

The story of the wanderings of the Boers in the South-African wilderness is one of the most remarkable in the annals of colonization. Owing large numbers of Hottentot slaves, they resented the Act of Emancipation as a piece of grievous oppression towards themselves. Their fears were so worked upon by unscrupulous speculators, that many of them believed they would receive no compensation for the liberation of their slaves, and sold their claims on the Imperial Government at a ruinous loss. In 1835 there was a strong emigration movement among the disaffected, and an advance party, headed by Uys and Maritz, turned their backs upon the old colony, and, after encountering great hardships, entered Natal, which was then only colonized by a small settlement of Englishmen. In the following year they were joined by a considerable party who may now be described as “the main body” of their discontented countrymen. The Dutch were soon strong enough to fight pitched battles with Dingaan, the Zulu king (who had massacred many of their number); and

ultimately, in concert with Panda, they defeated him, and raised his rival to the throne. Upon their proclaiming a Batavian Republic, the Government of the Cape asserted its authority by force, and a state of civil war ensued. In 1843 the Boers formally surrendered their claim to Natal, and retired over the Drakensberg to the country now known as the Free State. There they united with bodies of their countrymen, who, from about the year 1826, had crossed the Orange River in seasons of drought. Some of the Boers, headed by Mr. Andries Pretorius, proceeded still further into the interior, crossed the Vaal River, and took possession of the territory now known as the Trans-Vaal Republic. But the Imperial Government did not cease to regard them as British subjects, although it was not till 1848 that they were actually compelled to submit to the authority of the Governor of the Cape Colony.

In that year Sir Harry Smith proclaimed the Queen's sovereignty over the Orange River territory. The Committee of the Privy Council, in their report dated the 5th July 1850, justify that act in these terms :—" In 1836 the emigrant Boers settled themselves down in many parts of what is now called the Orange sovereignty; they assumed absolute independence; established a species of government for themselves; disputed native titles to land; disclaimed being amenable to any native jurisdiction, even when within the acknowledged territory of native chiefs; and, in the result, it became apparent, that unless the British Government interposed its authority, nothing but discord, violence and crime, and a total extinction of the rights of the natives, must follow." The Committee further allege, that " to adopt any other course than this would, in their opinion, be productive of scenes of anarchy and bloodshed, probably ending in the extinction of the African race over a wide extent of country." Sir Harry Smith's policy was an unfortunate one. It was that of a soldier who, although not without good impulses, was always obstinate and often unteachable, and a stranger to that spirit of conciliation by which alone different races can be brought into subjection to one government. His proclamation led to a rebellion of the Boers. Sir Harry, who was more at home in the field than in the Council chamber, marched against the Boers, and completely routed them at a place called Boemplaats; but his measures for the internal government of the country were of a most crude and unsatisfactory character,

and, on their failure, the British Government resolved to abandon the country. Those Englishmen who, on the faith of the Governor's proclamations and of orders in Council, had emigrated to, or acquired property in, the territory across the Orange River, protested in vain against the haste with which the Imperial authorities ignored principles upon which, only a short time previously, they had considered themselves bound to act. Sir George Clerk was the Commissioner under whose personal direction British authority was withdrawn from the Trans-Orange territory. His arguments in favour of the policy of which he was the instrument were entirely drawn from considerations of self-interest, which might well have operated before the annexation, but which at a subsequent date could not fairly be regarded apart from the general interests of civilization in South Africa.

Those interests have greatly suffered by the separation of the Free State from the possessions of the British Crown. The Boers have shown how right the Committee of Council were in the special reasons they gave for proclaiming them British subjects. Not only has the country itself retrograded, but it has engaged in a series of native wars of so pitiless and rapacious a character, that Sir Philip Wodehouse has, with the sanction of the Home Government, consented to acknowledge the Basutos as British subjects—this being the only means of preserving the remnant of their lands from robbery, and the tribe itself from destruction. And now, after a lapse of fourteen years, public opinion in South Africa is again unanimous in favour of retracing the backward step which was then taken.

Two years previously the bands of emigrant farmers who, under the "rebel" Pretorius, had crossed the Vaal River, and traversed a wide range of country (driving back or enslaving the natives), had negotiated a treaty by which they ceased to be British subjects. It is to the history of that treaty and its relation to the events which have followed, that I wish to call particular attention.

It is easy to sit in judgment on what experience has proved to be an error of policy; and, great as the mistake was, it was doubtless from the best possible motives that the independence of the disaffected Boers, who now form the two Republics of the Trans-Vaal and the Free State, was recognised. England found it difficult to govern scattered and distant communities of farmers who had

defied her authority, and engaged in petty but vexatious rebellions, and whose country, moreover, promised to be a burthen to the revenue. The Gordian knot was therefore cut by the entire severance of the territories occupied by the Boërs from the British possessions at the Cape. While a constitution was yet denied to the Cape colonists, a handful of turbulent Dutch settlers in the interior obtained not only self-government, but independence; and, what was really to be deplored, they succeeded in making treaties with us which they have converted into instruments of oppression.

The convention with the Trans-Vaal Boers was drawn up on the 16th of January 1852 between Major W. S. Hogge and Mr. C. M. Owen, Her Majesty's Assistant Commissioners for settling and adjusting of the eastern and north-eastern boundaries of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope on the one part, and on the other a deputation of emigrant farmers residing north of the the Vaal River, the principal member of which was Mr. Andries Pretorius, then Commandant-General, and subsequently first President of the Republic of South Africa. The following is the text of the treaty, which was ratified at Fort Beaufort on the 13th May 1852, by General Cathcart, Her Majesty's High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape Colony—

“1. The Assistant-Commissioners guarantee in the fullest manner, on the part of the British Government, to the emigrant farmers beyond the Vaal River, the right to manage their own affairs, and to govern themselves without any interference on the part of Her Majesty the Queen's Government, and that no encroachment shall be made by the said Government on the territory beyond to the north of the Vaal River; with the further assurance that the warmest wish of the British Government is to promote peace, free trade, and friendly intercourse with the emigrant farmers now inhabiting, or who may hereafter inhabit, that country, it being understood that this system of non-interference is binding upon both parties.

“2. Should any misunderstanding hereafter arise as to the true meaning of the words ‘the Vaal River,’ this question, in so far as regards the line from the source of that river over the Drakensberg, shall be settled and adjusted by Commissioners chosen by both parties.

“3. Her Majesty's Assistant-Commissioners hereby disclaim all alliances whatsoever, and with whomsoever, of the coloured natives north of the Vaal River.

“4. It is agreed that no slavery is, or shall be permitted or prac-

tised in the country to the north of the Vaal River by the emigrant farmers.

"5. Mutual facilities and liberty shall be afforded to traders and travellers on both sides of the Vaal River; it being understood that every waggon containing ammunition and fire-arms, coming from the south side of the Vaal River, shall produce a certificate, signed by a British magistrate or other functionary duly authorised to grant such, and which shall state the quantities of such articles contained in the said waggon, to the nearest magistrate north of the Vaal River, who shall act in the case as the regulations of the emigrant farmers direct.

"6. It is agreed that no objection shall be made by any British authority against the emigrant Boers purchasing their supplies of ammunition in any of the British Colonies and Possessions in South Africa, it being mutually understood that all trade in ammunition with the native tribes is prohibited, both by the British Government and the emigrant farmers on both sides of the Vaal River.

"7. It is agreed that, as far as possible, all criminals and other guilty parties who may fly from justice either way across the Vaal River, shall be mutually delivered up if such should be required; and that the British Courts, as well as those of the emigrant farmers, shall be mutually open to each other for all legitimate processes; and that summonses for witnesses sent either way across the Vaal River shall be backed by the magistrates on each side of the same respectively, to compel the attendance of such witnesses when required.

"8. It is agreed that certificates of marriage issued by proper authorities of the emigrant Farmers shall be held valid and sufficient to entitle children of such marriages to receive portions accruing to them in any British Colony or Possession in South Africa.

"9. It is agreed that any and every person now in possession of land, and residing in British territory, shall have free right and power to sell his said property, and remove unmolested across the Vaal River, and *vice versa*; it being distinctly understood that this arrangement does not comprehend criminals, or debtors without providing for the payment of their just and lawful debts.

"This done and signed at Sand River aforesaid, this 17th day of January 1852."

I believe that from that day to the present the Boers of the Trans-Vaal have had no reason to impeach the good faith of the British Government. We have fulfilled our part of the compact to the letter: it remains to be seen whether they have fulfilled theirs.

Before letting loose the Boers, or consenting that they should no longer be subjected to British authority, we were bound to protect the interests of the natives who were thus to be handed over abso-

lutely to a new set of masters. Lord Grey had a just sense of the duty which our Government owed to the natives beyond the Vaal, to provide them with such assistance against the aggressions of the Boers as might lie in its power. Military aid was, of course, out of the question; but he was of opinion that the Government might, through its agents, promote a union of the tribes against their white enemies, and assist them, by the appointment of a suitable officer, to organize measures for their defence, and to settle down to agricultural pursuits. In a despatch addressed to Sir Harry Smith on the 12th November 1850, his lordship made this recommendation, but it was never acted upon, and indeed General Cathcart (the successor of Sir Harry) adopted rigidly the policy of non-interference as regarded both the Boers and the natives living to the north of the Vaal River.

It is true that the English Commissioners explicitly pledged the Boers to the abolition of slavery, and that this article of the treaty gives us, at the present time, an indubitable right to interfere with the domestic institutions of "the emigrant farmers." But the feelings of these persons towards the native tribes, and the outrages of which they had been guilty, were too well known to allow it to be supposed that the treaty would be in this particular more than the dead letter it has ever since remained. Still it may be urged, that the British authorities did what they could, and that in making the prohibition of slavery one of the conditions upon which the independence of the Republic was based, they upheld a just principle, and, at the same time, gave to the Imperial Government a perpetual right to interfere in the interest of freedom. But it is not too much to affirm that any value which might be attached to Article IV. was wholly neutralized by the exceptional privileges conceded by Article VI. The Boers were permitted to purchase any quantity of ammunition from the colonial markets, while "all trade in ammunition with the native tribes" was absolutely prohibited.* This was placing the lamb at the mercy of the wolf with a vengeance; and although it cannot be said that Article VI. has entirely accomplished its object, yet the effect of it has been to place the best weapons in the hands of the Boers, the worst in those of the natives; to give to the one

* So thoroughly did the Boers understand the value of this concession, that they attached to the sale of gunpowder to the natives the penalty of death.

party an unlimited supply of good ammunition, and to limit the other to a small and uncertain supply of inferior quality. If the Boers had acted justly by the natives, there perhaps would not have been much ground of complaint; but when it became manifest that they used their power to oppress and enslave the tribes in their neighbourhood, it was the duty of the British Government either impartially to close the markets against both parties, or to place them on equal terms.

The Trans-Vaal Boers signalized their independence after their accustomed fashion. They expelled Missionaries, and jealously excluded travellers from their country, even subjecting them to the imposition of fines and other penalties. They despatched marauding expeditions against the natives, because they were friendly to Englishmen who desired to explore the interior, or because they were supposed to be too powerful or to possess arms. They enslaved the women and children among their captives under the name of *inboeking*, or apprenticeship; and made themselves notorious by the massacre of those ancient and helpless tribes of Bushmen, who might have commanded a feeling of pity, which the more warlike Kaffirs failed to extort. Many pages might be filled with a recital of their earlier atrocities. It is perhaps sufficient to refer to the experience of Dr. Livingstone, who incurred their hostility because to his influence they attributed the refusal of Secheli to give them a monopoly of the ivory trade. As this Chief would not exclude English traders from his territories, the Boers not only burnt his town to ashes, killed a large number of his people, and carried many more into captivity, but destroyed Livingstone's Missionary station, and would have murdered the great explorer himself, if at the time he had not been absent at Kuruman, the residence of his father-in-law, Mr. Moffat. You will perhaps remember that Dr. Livingstone, in conversing with us on this painful episode in his career, mentioned that, at a later period, he saw in captivity among the Boers large numbers of Bechuana children, who had been educated in his own Sunday-schools, and afterwards torn from their homes by the ruffians who composed the Dutch commandoes.

The heroic Missionary and explorer, in a memorial addressed to Sir John Pakington (dated 12th December 1852), thus described the outrages which the Boers perpetrated at Kolobeng, solely for the purpose of shutting out Europeans from the interior:—

“ In order that my complaint may be fully understood, I beg leave to state that I have resided with an independent tribe called the Bakwains, in the capacities of Christian Missionary and medical practitioner, during the last eight years. The chief of the tribe is named Sechele, and their country is that which is watered by the Kolobeng, Mariqua and Limpopo Rivers (about 24° south latitude, and 26° east longitude). There was no trade carried on previous to the commencement of my Mission, and petty wars were of frequent occurrence. But wars ceased, and a brisk commerce was soon established with the colony, and trade was carried on in security, not only in that and the adjacent tribes, but it was extended to tribes 800 miles beyond the Bakwains. The latter field is called the region around and beyond Lake Ngami. Now the path to this distant region has been discovered in its entire course by Englishmen, and no portion of it runs through the country occupied or claimed by the Trans-Vaal Boers. The Mission stations of Kuruman and Kolobeng are situated on this path, but both are about 100 miles west of the Boer territory. In addition to the traffic carried on by Englishmen in the region beyond Kolobeng, many English gentlemen availed themselves of our route, in order to enjoy sport among the large game with which the country abounds. The relays of cattle, of both traders and gentlemen, were left in charge of the Bakwains, and my house was used as a depôt for provisions in their return trips; and though it became necessary to remove the Bakwain town to a distance of eight miles from my house, the provisions of the English were always faithfully guarded, even in my absence.

“ Frequent attempts were made by the Trans-Vaal Boers to induce the Chief Sechele to prevent the English from passing him in their way north; and because he refused to comply with this policy, a commando was sent against him by Mr. Pretorius, which, on the 30th September last, attacked and destroyed his town; killed sixty of his people, and carried off upwards of 200 women and children. I can declare, most positively, that, except in the matter of refusing to throw obstacles in the way of English traders, Sechele never offended the Boers by either word or deed. They wished to divert the trade into their own hands. They also plundered my house of property, which would cost in England at least 335*l*. They smashed all the bottles containing medicines, and tore all the books of my library, scattering the leaves to the winds; and, besides my personal property, they carried off or destroyed a large amount of property belonging to English gentlemen and traders. Of the women and children captured, many of the former will escape, but the latter are reduced to a state of hopeless slavery. They are sold and bought as slaves; and I have myself seen and conversed with such taken from other tribes, and

living as slaves in the houses of the Boers. One of Sechele's children is among the number captured, and the Boer who owns him can, if necessary, be pointed out."

Dr. Livingstone was not so famous then as he is now; and he obtained no redress, General Cathcart being of opinion that "the losses and inconveniences he had sustained did not amount to more than the ordinary occurrences incidental to a state of war."

The Boers have not even the excuse of an unproductive soil for their raids upon their neighbours. The editor of the *Natal Mercury* has been good enough to send me an excellent description of the territory, which was written by a keen observer, who emigrated there from Natal seven years ago. It will be seen that his bird's-eye view is as complete as could be desired.

"First, a word about the country, which is, perhaps, the finest stretch of land in all South Africa. Utrecht district (this side of Belela's mountain) is excellently adapted for grazing purposes and for cultivation—plenty of water, good grass, wood enough, and an abundance of coal of very good quality, both for smith's work and for domestic use. On Belela's Berg, and towards Pongola, are splendid sheep runs: horses live there during the worst times of sickness; coal is found in abundance; in the mountains are fine woods of yellow-wood, stink-wood, &c.; and it is said the precious metals are found there. The Utrecht district is small at present, because the 'proclaimed ground' is not yet inhabited, but if the latter is once accomplished, then will Utrecht be one of the richest districts in the country, and in a position to send to the market wool, butter, coal, cattle and cereals in abundance. The little village of Utrecht now consists of about seventy houses, a Dutch Reformed Church, school and parsonage, a temporary court-house and jail, no canteen, and, unhappily, no good store, for which, however, there is a good opening. If once the railway to Newcastle is opened, then there can be no doubt but Utrecht will become a large and flourishing place, with a good trade, and a fair chance of an extensive population. Utrecht is between five and six hours on horseback from Marthinus-Wesselstroom, district Wakkerstroom. If you go from Utrecht, and follow the main road to Lydenburg, then seven hours' travelling will bring you just at the foot of the Drakensberg, at Mr. Engelbrecht's place, and another hour's trek on to the top of the Berg, from where you may have one of the finest views of Natal. To the right, the long Drakensberg range; to the left, Doorberg, Belelasberg, Zululand; just in front, Biggarsberg,

Klip River County, yea, almost part of the county of Weenen. A trek of another two hours will bring you to the main road to the village of Marthinus-Wesselstroom, so called in honour of Mr. Pretorius. It is, at present, a small, unsightly place, with a brick-built church, a public office, and a few houses. It should be a very large town, with a very extensive trade, situated as it is on the main road to Natal. The Wakkerstroom district is very large, and very few sheep thrive well, horses and cattle find abundant pasturage, coal is also found (here and there), and cereals grow well. Almost every farm has abundance of water, though there is a scarcity of wood. Following the main road to Lydenburg, we cross Vaal River, near Mr. Buhrman's beautiful farm, 'The Emigrantie,' and enter upon the gradually rising Vaal River vlakte, in the district of Lydenburg. Lydenburg was formerly an independent Republic, but unfortunately joined the Republic. Not many years ago there were no inhabited farms along this part of Vaal River; but since the war with Massoch, many Lydenburg farmers have left their own homesteads and settled on the flats, so that Vaal River is gradually becoming lined with sheep farms, and the vlakte studded with homesteads. From Mr. Buhrman's place, six hours' on horseback, to the north-east, begin the M'Corkindale stations, stretching far and wide towards Umzwaai's country. All the farms in this part of the Republic are sheep farms—most of them good cattle runs; coal in abundance. Still following the main road, we cross Comate, and bend our course to the Crocodile River *hoogte*. Sheep must be tended here with greater care, also horses; but corn grows better. So on the Lydenburg. Few farms here are suited for sheep, or, except when properly stabled, for horses. Cattle do not thrive properly; but it is the country for corn. Give Lydenburg an export market, and it will grow thousands upon thousands of muids of wheat, besides dried fruits, plenty of good tobacco, and spirits. Lydenburg is one of the oldest places of the Republic—a pleasant, well-watered, finely-wooded little town, with a Dutch Reformed Church and parsonage, a public office and jail, a large Berlin Mission station, a mill, and several stores. All that Lydenburg wants is a near market for her produce. The country beyond Lydenburg for many a mile (to the east and north-east) is bushy, and good for cattle in winter; towards the north-east it is also very good for agriculture. Gold is said to have been found in the neighbourhood of Lydenburg; lead and other minerals are sure to be there.

"Again, taking the main road to the W.S.W., we cross many a cool and rich stream of water, and, gradually ascending, we reach the Steenkampsberg, about one day's ride on horseback from Lydenburg. Steenkampsberg is one of the offshoots of the Drakensberg, and from Steenkampsberg, to the north, we reach the Magneetbergen and

Sekukunisland to the south-west, a pretty, elevated tableland, studded for many a mile with farms, where cattle and sheep thrive well; cereals grow beautifully, but horses require careful stabling. About sixteen hours on horseback from Lydenburg is the projected village of Nazareth, where, as yet, only a Dutch Reformed Church and a few houses are built; but which place, of a necessity, must become an important town. The produce of this place is corn, wool, butter, cattle, tobacco (of course there is coal). The whole country here is well watered, but not wooded, except to the north-east and north.

“Proceeding in a south-westerly direction, we enter the Pretoria district, and reach the Magaliesberg, or Witwatersrand. The country here is well grown with thorn-bush, and everywhere well watered. Taking the east and north-east side of Magaliesberg, we enter the land of coffee, cotton, sugar, oranges and corn; of hot springs and rich mineral mines; of all kinds of game; of giraffes, ostriches, &c. An immense tract of country, stretching towards Zoutspanberg, and, northward, the Rustenberg district, and the pleasant town of Rustenberg, with its fine Reformed Church, parsonage and school, its *Her-voomde* Kirk still in course of erection, its fine double-storied courthouse, its several large stores (sometimes empty, however), its ever-burning brick-kilns, and its well-kept streets. Still more northwards, and towards the north-west, lies the densely-populated neighbourhoods of Marico groot en klein Marico. Rustenberg is, no doubt, except for its rather oppressive atmosphere in summer, the pleasantest place in the Republic.

“Taking the south-west side of Magaliesberg, and just between that berg and Witwatersrand, we reach Pretoria—so called in honour of Mr. Pretorius—at present the capital of the Republic, or, as it is called, the *Zetelplaats*. There are two churches, several schools, stores (most times empty), Government buildings, and perhaps 150 or 200 houses, mostly whitewashed. The country round Pretoria is well adapted for agriculture and cattle-breeding; agriculture, however, will succeed best. It is only when you reach the higher tablelands that sheep thrive well. From Nazareth to Pretoria is sixteen hours on horseback: the roads are mostly very good. Still going W.S.W., we soon enter the Potchefstroom district.

“Taking our course *via* Witwatersrand, we cross some elevated tableland, till we reach the sources of Mooi River and Schoonspruit. Both Mooi River and Schoonspruit are lined with farms—chiefly agricultural farms, though cattle and sheep are found everywhere. Oranges, all kinds of fruit (including grapes) are found here in abundance, especially at Hartebeesteintein and neighbourhood. Going north-west, we get to Makwasi and Meletchhof, small villages. Turning to the south-east, we pass Klerksdorp, and reach Potchefstroom.

“Potchefstroom is the largest place in the Republic, and should be the capital. A good description of this place appeared some time ago in the *Mercury*, so that I need now only say that Potchefstroom wants only a population and a proper Government to make it the finest, and perhaps the most important town in South Africa.

“From Potchefstroom, along the Losberg road, and past the beautiful farm of J. J. Hoffman, Esq., we soon enter the Heildberg district, with the little village of Heildberg in the centre, and gradually ascending, we reach once more the Vaal River vlekke, inhabited for many a mile only by wildebeeste, bucks, and a few lions; and crossing again the Vaal River, we reach the Natal frontier after a good day's ride. Nearly the whole of the Vaal River vlekke is good for sheep as well as for cattle: though no abundance of water, there is still enough, and coal nearly everywhere.

“Such, in a few words, is the recent South-African Republic. From Zululand to Mendai, from Vaal River to Zoutspansberg, a country which can produce in any quantity wool, cattle, butter, corn, skins, feathers, tobacco, coffee, sugar, cotton, fruit, spirits—not to speak of its mines of coal, lead, iron, and most likely silver and gold.”

It is manifest from this description that Nature has not been chary of her bounty in the territory of the Trans-Vaal, and that the Boers have really come into possession of what the foregoing writer calls “the finest stretch of land in all South Africa.” Such a country, 30,000 square miles in extent, and peopled by a hardy and industrious race, should be at once prosperous, and growing in prosperity. Instead of this, it is miserably poor, and public credit is at so low an ebb, that the paper currency (which is the only money circulating in the Republic) is worth next to nothing—articles being sometimes sold at 500 per cent. above their value in order to enable the merchants to eke out a profit. A depreciated currency from being a consequence in its turn becomes a cause of poverty and social disorganization.* This unhappy state

* A correspondent of the *Trans-Vaal Argus* (20th May 1868) says:—“It would occupy too much space to enumerate all the causes of the disaffection that prevails, but a few may be given. A Government which has failed as this has done to maintain the supremacy of the law, and has allowed the districts of Wakkerstroom and Utrecht to remain in a state of insurrection for eight months, without any attempt to reduce them to order except by weak and unauthorised concessions to the delinquents, cannot expect much respect from its subjects. A Government which gives transfer of 300,000 acres of land to a private individual illegally, and is made to cancel the same without giving any compensation for the grievous injury that has been inflicted on that person, and without visiting the offender

of things takes its root in various causes. There are laws, but obedience to them is far from general. Little, if any, respect for authority exists. There are many high-sounding officials and departments, but there is no unity of action among them, and they are mostly maintained for show. Education is all but neglected, and the younger race of Boers are likely to be yet more illiterate than their fathers. The State does not support more than four public schools, and the teachers in these complain that they cannot get their salaries. Ridiculous stories are told of the sort of persons—discharged soldiers and other adventurers—who are deemed qualified to teach the young idea how to shoot. But the greatest source of demoralization—that, indeed, to which all others are but tributary streams—is the remorseless and fanatical hatred of the Boers towards the native tribes. Strange to say, this passion has been exalted to a religious duty, and in the Dutch commandoes the intolerant spirit of the Crusader has mingled with the cupidity of the buccaneer. To massacre the men because they are heathen, and to enslave the children because they make useful (as well as inexpensive) house servants and farm-labourers—these are the chief features that distinguish what may be called “the foreign” or Kaffir policy of the Boers.

The legal enslavement of Kaffir prisoners has been both denied and justified. We are first told that the Republic recognises no

with any punishment, cannot look for much respect. A Government whose orders are continually disobeyed with impunity, as in the late commandeering, can look for neither submission nor respect. A Government which cannot raise a revenue without continually increasing the debt of the country and ruining its credit, and can only provide for its payment by delusive ‘promises to pay,’ which has made the Republic a bye word and laughing stock among neighbouring States, is not worthy of much confidence.” A correspondent of a Natal paper (June 1, 1868), writes:—“As to the liberties and facilities held out to travellers and merchants, let me enumerate a few of them. If a merchant refuses to receive Trans-Vaal Government notes (which are avowedly at fifty per cent. discount, and which no Boer will take in payment for produce), the same as gold and silver, he commits a criminal offence, and renders himself liable to have his license annulled. If a merchant imports any goods the Government may be in want of, he has to submit to their being seized by them, no matter how large and valuable the consignment, or how much wanted for legitimate trading purposes: he will be paid, it is true, but in Government’s own time, at Government’s own price, and in Government’s own paper money. Among the travelling facilities I need only mention the commando law, and the recent attempt to stop prospecting parties.”

such system, and then we are assured that its continuance is necessary as an act of humanity to the captive children. The following letter was written by direction of the Duke of Buckingham, in reply to a Memorial from the Aborigines' Protection Society :—

“Downing Street, 8th January 1868.

“MY LORD,

“I am directed by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos to acquaint your lordship that His Grace has received from the Foreign Office the Memorial signed by yourself and others, on behalf of the Aborigines' Protection Society, dated December 1867, regarding the practice of Slavery in the Trans-Vaal Republic.

“He desires me to inform you that Sir P. Wodehouse expressed an opinion against interference in the year 1865, on the particular cases brought to light by Mr. Martin,* and referred to in the Memorial, addressed by the Society to Lord Stanley in August last ; but His Grace has satisfaction in apprising the Society that Sir P. Wodehouse, in the following year, on further facts coming to his knowledge, addressed vigorous remonstrances to the President of the Trans-Vaal Republic against the practices which were alleged of kidnapping children, and holding them in long terms of apprenticeship, tending to their enslavement ; and that the President, in reply, announced

“Maritzburg, Natal,

“June 7th, 1867.

* “In the year 1864, after a sea voyage to Delagoa Bay, thirty-six hours from Natal, I took a 700 miles' trip to Zoutpansberg, Trans-Vaal Republic, which you will see on Hall's map. On my return I had charge of two waggons with ivory. I objected to any natives accompanying the waggons, but was told they were going to Natal for work. When we reached the capital, Pretoria, the natives (six in number) were forcibly seized and taken away from my protection by a Dutchman. I appealed to an official, the field cornet—who, I regret to say, was an Englishman—who assured me that the boys would run away, and that they were taken from me because they had not a pass, although the waggon had been searched for runaways before we reached the capital. Next day, on coming to the Vaal River boundary of the Free State, I was astonished to find that the brother of the Dutchman, who was a passenger in my cart, actually had one of the boys so forcibly seized. Two days afterwards he sent the poor wretch, on a Sunday, without allowing him anything to eat, a long journey ahead, and took away his kaross or covering, although it was very wet. Next day the Vaal River was full when we crossed with a boat. The poor boy came to the bank, said he could swim, and, in coming through the stream, perished before our eyes, although every exertion was made to save him. I contend that this native lost his life by having been taken out of my protection, and I suppose the other five are still in bondage.”—*Extract from Mr. Martin's letter to the Aborigines' Protection Society.*

that legal proceedings had been taken against certain offenders, who had kidnapped children, and conveyed earnest assurances of the intention of his Government to repress slave-dealing and slavery.

“I am, MY LORD,

“Your lordship’s obedient Servant,

“FREDERICK ELLIOT.

“LORD ALFRED SPENCER CHURCHILL.”

Although this letter is an admission that the charges preferred by the Society against the authorities of the Republic do not rest upon an isolated case, it yet presents Mr. Pretorius in the too flattering light of a Chief Magistrate who is scrupulously anxious to enforce the law and to ensure the observance of treaties. There is, however, too much reason to fear that in this matter Mr. Marthinus Wessel Pretorius is simply walking in the footsteps of his father, Mr. Andries Pretorius; and I am also afraid (although I do not wish to detract from the services of an honest and able public servant) that Sir Philip Wodehouse was far too easily satisfied with “the earnest assurances” of the Trans-Vaal President. It would be some satisfaction to know what was the nature of the legal proceedings which are said to have been instituted against “certain offenders,” and whether anybody was imprisoned, fined, or even reprovved for indulging in a practice which the civilized world now condemns as one of the greatest of crimes. The fact is, that there is no mystery or concealment about the so-called “apprenticeship” system. How could there be mystery or concealment when 4000 Kaffir “children” (many of them grown-up children) are held as slaves—although disguised as “apprentices”—by the Dutch farmers? To proceed fairly against “certain offenders” would be to arraign half the country at the bar, and to expect prosecutors, judges, and juries to convict themselves.

The Boers endeavour to conceal the real character of their institution under the euphemism of “apprenticeship.” The theory which they seek to palm off on a credulous public is, that from motives of humanity they apprentice and exercise a paternal supervision over destitute Kaffir children. Tender-hearted Boers! They do not tell us who make the children destitute; who send out commandoes for the express purpose of killing the parents in order to steal the offspring; who fix a price on “the black

ivory" according to "the weight" (or age) of "the tusk." It would, perhaps, be too much to expect the Boers to impart information on these points, but they would be a shade or two more respectable if they ceased to play the hypocrite. I repeat that the Boers create the misery which they profess to alleviate; and I assert, without fear of disproof, that commandoes are organized for the express purpose of capturing children to be converted into slaves, and that in all parts of the Republic a traffic in these human chattels is briskly carried on, the prices usually varying from twelve to twenty pounds per head.

Fortunately for the sake of humanity, the attention of right-minded persons in Natal and at the Cape has been drawn, of late years, to the proceedings of the Dutch settlers of the Transvaal. Nor would it be right to withhold the credit which is due to citizens of the Republic who—not without considerable personal risk—have raised their voices and employed their pens in condemnation of the iniquities which have been perpetrated before their eyes. In the worst governed States there is always a minority who are keenly alive to injustice, and anxious to remove it as soon as they can exert the power, and that such a party exists in the Republic of South Africa is a great element of hope for the future of that country.

I regret that freedom of speech is so little respected in the Transvaal that it would not be safe to mention the names of those who are prepared to revolutionize the native policy of the Boers. But as one gentleman has had the courage to publish his name in connection with the disclosures he has made, it may be as well to state that the annexed letter, published in the *Friend of Free State*, is from the pen of Mr. G. W. Steyn:—

"Haassekraal, near Potchefstroom, Trans-Vaal,
" March 13th, 1866.

"You have already been made aware that loads of 'black ivory' (young Kaffirs) are constantly hawked about the country, and disposed of like so many droves of cattle. This barbarous traffic has now become the subject of deep regret to every man born with a sense of humanity. Many are the hearts that were burning to see the subject brought to the notice of the Colonial Government; but as none would take the task on himself for fear of receiving some absurd sentence from a tyrannical, bigoted and arbitrary Government, the truth has from time to time been veiled, till at last, animated with a feeling of pity for the several naked and half-starved young natives who are

daily sold and re-sold to men who consider them brutes, and treat them as such, I addressed a letter to Governor Wodehouse, giving him an unbiased account of this fast-increasing and lucrative branch of our trade, with the request that His Excellency would be pleased to forward a copy of my communication to President Pretorius, and also referred him to some of the most influential gentlemen here to verify my statements, which requests His Excellency immediately complied with. The result, as I have been informed by His Excellency, is as follows—‘I lost no time in addressing President Pretorius on the subject; and also in applying to the gentlemen whom you had named for confirmation of the statement as to the sale of the native children. From the latter I have received letters fully supporting your allegations, but Mr. Pretorius has not yet replied. You may rely upon it that the subject shall receive the most serious consideration of this Government.’

“I am at any moment prepared to prove to the most bigoted and biased jury, that, notwithstanding denials and evasions on the part of an interested Government, a system of virtual slavery is carried on here under the plausible pretence of ‘apprenticing orphan children.’ I will prove that the war now raging at Zoutpansberg is solely on account of some Boers having made frequent, unprovoked and bloody attacks on the natives there, to enrich themselves with cattle, and secure victims of this system of forced labour.

“I challenge President Pretorius to prove that the several young natives he has in his service are orphans, or that one-fiftieth part of the (at least) 4000 natives sold here during the last fifteen years are such, unless they have been deprived of their fathers, and perhaps mothers also, by the bullet of some ruffian of a Boer. Will President Pretorius dare to deny that such is the manner in which hundreds of helpless children are annually made orphans, for the sole purpose of benefitting the pockets of some miscreants? It is often asserted that all these acts of woe are done to civilize the natives, and only amount to the apprenticing of orphan children until they are twenty-five years old. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that the hundreds of natives annually sold are all orphans. How are these children to know when they are twenty-five years old? and the means by which they may seek and obtain their freedom? Their twenty-five is seldom if ever completed till death relieves them from the bond of slavery. Call it what you will, it is slavery, by compulsory labour and compulsory detention. President Pretorius belongs to a self-called religious people, and he agrees with them in looking on the dark-skinned races as the ‘accursed sons of Ham,’ who only deserve the name of ‘schepsels,’ and who are doomed by heaven to perpetual servitude. It is their opinion that by inflicting slavery on the natives they are performing the will of God.”

The statements made in this letter are sufficiently explicit, and if borne out by subsequent inquiry (as they would have been if any inquiry had been instituted), it is difficult to understand why Governor Wodehouse should have been satisfied with the vague assurances and promises of Mr. President Pretorius.

Some idea of the personal experiences of the captives may be derived from two or three simple narratives which were taken down from the lips of the native women in January of the present year, and forwarded to me by a gentleman in Natal, who has been zealous in his efforts to expose the cruelties of the Boers.

RACHEL'S STORY.

"I was taken by the Dutch when quite a babe. Our people lived on the other side of Makapan's poort. The Dutch fought with them. Our fathers were beaten in the fight, and many of them were killed. Our mothers ran away with us, and hid in caves; but at last thirst compelled them to go in search of water. My mother and others were seen before they reached the water, and were shot, and we children were taken. The very little ones were put on horseback, while the bigger ones had to run on before, until we got to the Laager. At the division I fell to the lot of Mynheer —.* I stayed with him several years, and then he sold me to the Mynheer —. I stayed with him several years, and then he sold me to Mynheer —, with whom I stayed until I was grown up. The price he gave for me was 6*l.* and a cow in calf. I did not know, however, that I was sold until long afterwards. I was merely told to go and work for him. My first master was kind to me, but my second was very cruel.

"When I was grown up, my master sold me to a man (a native) who wanted me for a wife. He gave 6*l.* for me, but as he was a drunken fellow, and used me very cruelly, I ran away from him, and went back to my master. After some time I was again sold to the man with whom I now live. He also gave 6*l.* for me. Neither he nor the other were Kaffirs living up there, but were waggon drivers from Natal. My master thus got 12*l.* for me. After taking me my husband lived about two years amongst the Dutch, during which time I worked for different people, traders and others, up that way, and earned a cow; but when I came away with the man I am living with, I was not allowed to take it with me. It was kept by Mynheer —. When with Mynheer —, we lived in Pretoria, and during my stay there I saw many children brought down from beyond Zoutpansberg, and sold about town at from 3*l.* to 8*l.*, according to size. Some were sold for horses and cattle.

"At last my husband came down to Natal as waggon-driver, and we

* The names of the woman's two masters are in my possession.

have lived here ever since. When at the Vaal River, on our way down, my husband's master told a little (black) boy to stay with a Dutchman living there until his return; and it was not till we were more than half-way down that we learnt that the boy had been sold. Children are very dear down at the Vaal River, as it is so far from where they are got. Children are what they call *apprenticed* out to the different people for a number of years, or until grown up. I never saw my papers, nor the papers of any one else. When we are bartered or sold from one to another, we are not told of it, but are told that it is to stay for a little while. It is not until afterwards that we find we have been sold. When we think we have stayed long enough, and ask to be set free, we are whipped. I do not know of any one having got their liberty except by marriage to men not resident there. We are told that after we have served our time we will get paid for our work, but that we never do."

ADELA'S STORY.

"The country in which we lived before our people were scattered by the Dutch is near Zoutpansberg. I remember when I was taken, although very young at the time. There were others taken besides myself, some older and some younger. The Dutch surrounded our kraal while it was yet day, and set fire to the huts. The noise of the fire awoke us, and we ran out just as we were. The grown-up people who attempted to run out of the kraal were shot down, and the rest huddled together, surrounded by the Dutch on horseback. The children were then put together in one place, while the rest were made to go into the castle kraal, which was built of stone, and were there shot at till they all fell down dead or dying. The Dutch then took us to their waggons, and we were divided amongst them. I fell to the lot of Mr. Van Zweel. My master often lived in town, and while there I used to see children brought down from Zoutpansberg and sold for money or cattle. They did not use to hawk children about in this way when I was taken: this practice has taken place since, but one would sell to another, as occasion required. When I was about fourteen years of age my master sold me to a Natal Kaffir waggon-driver for 30*l.* I came down here with him, and have lived with him ever since. He was at that time, and still is, waggon-driver to the Messrs. Barrett of this city."

SOPHIA'S STORY.

"I was born in Zululand. When I was still quite young the Dutch came and made war against our king. They were generally victorious, and then did their best to capture the children and cattle. I remember the time I was taken captive. There had been

a great fight, and our fathers were beaten. Our mothers fled with us, and hid in the kloofs, but the white men saw where we went to, gave chase, and we were taken. Our mothers were very sorrowful, and cried very much. They attempted to follow on behind, but the Dutch told them to go back, or they would shoot them. My mother followed for some distance, but at last I lost sight of her. She could not keep up with the horses. As we grew up and began to understand the Dutch and their ways, we were told that we had to serve an apprenticeship, and would then get wages. After we had served many years their President told us that we had served long enough, and ought to be set free or get wages; but we did neither. Finding that I never would be free so long as I lived with the Dutch; I made up my mind to try and escape to where the English lived, as I had heard of them from the Natal Kaffir waggon-drivers and leaders, who came into the country with their masters to trade or hunt. So one evening I ran away, and travelled during the night, until I got to where an Englishman lived, near the border. He had a Dutch wife, who knew me. She was a good woman, and hid me until her husband was ready to go down to Natal with his waggon, and then I came with him. I am a member of the Wesleyan Society, and was converted under the late Rev. Mr. Pearse."

ODELA'S STORY.

"Odela says, when she was very little the Dutch came before day-break, and those who ran away were shot down. Old people were shot down, the Dutch not waiting to see whether they were living or not. The big people were separated from the others, and driven into stone kraals. Since living amongst the Dutch she often saw commandoes go out, and the people return with children taken from their homes in the same way as she was. She often saw Commandant Schoeman and President Pretorius at Zoutpansberg. Another woman from Zoutpansberg, who resided last at Pretoria, also alleges, in addition to the foregoing, that whilst at Pretoria she often saw waggons with children, who were sold to the people about there, 6*l.* and 12*l.* being the price asked for children according to their age. . . . If the people are sent by the chief at the order of the commandant, they get a sheepskin a month, or a heifer a year. If the chief could not prevail on the people to come, or from some other cause, the Dutch would say he was getting impudent, and required a lesson. This was their excuse for assembling a commando.

"By Utrecht (adjoining Natal) the Dutch buy children for dogs."

No language of mine could add to the pathetic interest of these narratives, all of which bear the impress of truth.

The evidence as to the existence of slavery in the Trans-Vaal is

so overwhelming, and I have received such a mass of testimony, that it is difficult to make a selection. But it would be unpardonable to omit to refer to the recent debate in the Cape Parliament, when Mr. Godlonton moved for the production of all the correspondence on the subject that had passed between the Governor and inhabitants of the Trans-Vaal Republic or Her Majesty's Government. The motion was agreed to without a division, but in his speech introducing the subject Mr. Godlonton made these weighty remarks:—

“The British Government had expended twenty millions sterling in its endeavour to put a stop to slavery in all parts of the world, and he considered that at this moment the inhabitants of the Trans-Vaal Republic, or a great majority of them, were British subjects, and it would be an eternal disgrace to the English Government if it was to permit its own subjects to remain in slavery to an extent which it was said to be carried on in the Trans-Vaal. The other day he read an extract from a letter, which would be in the recollection of hon. members, which extract stated that no fewer than 3000 children had been at that time very recently apprenticed, and that a great many cruelties and atrocities had been committed. He thought it was not right for the Council to pass over an allegation of this kind, and they were, he considered, fully justified in calling for inquiry. For his own part, he thought that the sooner the attention of the British Government was called to the relations which were held with the Republicans beyond their border, the better. It would be for the interest of all parties, and he looked forward to such a consummation at no distant day, if there could be something like a federal union of all the colonies in British South Africa. He could see no end to the difficulties in which they would be involved, unless they adopted this system of federation, so as to unite all the colonies, including Natal, the Trans-Vaal Republic, the Free State, and the Eastern and Western Provinces, under one general government on the federal principle. He thought that they ought to consider this subject fairly, and it would very well become the Council to take some steps in such a direction.”

It is perhaps premature to raise the question of a South-African Confederation, although there are many persons, besides Mr. Godlonton, who see in such a scheme a remedy for many of the evils which now distract that part of the empire and impede its progress. But the idea is taking root in South Africa, and events which are now transpiring in the Trans-Vaal Republic, in the Free

State, and in Basutoland are calculated to give it a great impetus. In the same month (July last) in which Mr. Godlonton asked in the Cape Parliament for the production of official correspondence Mr. Robinson made a similar motion in the Natal Legislature. The *Natal Witness* publishes the following report of the hon. gentleman's speech:—

“He did not hesitate to say that slavery existed in the Trans-Vaal, and that, too, with the knowledge and connivance of the Government. It might, he knew, be said that this was not slavery, but merely a system for providing for destitute children, which was adopted by benevolent farmers; but he (Mr. Robinson) pronounced it the most abominable system of slavery ever carried on. How were these so-called destitute children got? Why, war parties went out expressly to get those children, and plunder the tribes against whom they went out. A Commission on this subject had been appointed by the Volksraad, at the close of last year, and had brought up a report which was intended merely to satisfy the English Government. In that report occurred the following paragraph, which also appeared in the *Staats Courant*, of 4th December 1864:—‘Another commando was set on foot, under orders of the Superintendent Albasini and Stephanus Venter, against the Chief Magor, he having been accused of being unwilling to pay his taxes to the Government, and likewise charged by Albasini with having, together with other chieftains, conspired against the white inhabitants, which, however, has been contradicted by Vercuiel, late Landdrost of Zoutpansberg. On the arrival of this commando at Magor's, a message was sent to him to come down, and to bring his taxes with him, an assurance for the safety of his person and property being at the same time given. Magor came down from the mountain, bringing with him between 200 and 300 head of cattle, which he handed to the chief officers of the laager. Magor was at once placed in confinement, and during the night was murdered, whilst his tribe was destroyed by the commando of Knob-noses (these are under the control of Albasini), their kraals laid waste, and women and children carried off. Another commando against the Chief Tabuna was got up by order of Michael Buys, a subject of the Republic, and field-cornet of the coloured tribes near Schoemandaal, and the Kaffir Tromp, a subordinate of the late Landdrost J. Vercuiel, under supervision of the Chief Monene. Tabuna was murdered by the commando, his cattle were taken, women and children carried off, and various atrocities committed. According to the declaration of J. Albasini, Tabuna was a friendly Kaffir, who annually paid his taxes to the Government.’ That was a translation of part of the report of the Commission referred to. But a more striking instance occurred in the report of a public meeting held at Potchefstroom. There Mr.

Ludorff was reported to have said, 'A number of children, too young to remove, had been collected in a heap, and burnt alive.' Mr. Evans—'The murderings and plunderings that had been committed were but a fractional part of the crimes that had been perpetrated.' Mr. J. C. Steyn, one of the oldest residents, had said—'There is now innocent blood on our hands, which has not yet been avenged, and the curse of God rested on the land in consequence.' Field-cornet Rustenburg said—'The chief Kakekatge was told to come down from the mountain, but he sent one of his subordinates as a proof of amity; that while a delay of five days was guaranteed by the Commandant-General, Paul Krüger, who was then in command, orders were at the same time given to attack the natives at the break of day, which was accordingly done, but which resulted in utter failure.' Mr. J. H. Roselt said—'No less than 103 children were found destitute, together with seven belonging to another kraal. Of these children, he had been informed, thirty-seven had been disposed of by lot; he would like to know what had become of the remaining sixty-six, for they had disappeared in a most marvellous and mysterious manner.' Mr. Jan Taljaard said—'He was opposed to apprenticeship: children were forcibly taken from their mothers, and were then called destitute, and apprenticed.' But the most remarkable of all was Daniel van Vauren, who had said that, 'If they had to clear the country, and could not have the children they found, he would shoot them.' The Attorney-General of the Trans-Vaal Republic was reported to have said that he 'opposed the attempt to abolish the practice of apprenticing destitute children to persons in the commandoes exclusively, as both illegal and unjust; illegal, because it made a distinction; unjust, because it created a preference.' This he (Mr. Robinson) considered most conclusive evidence that slavery did exist in the Trans-Vaal Republic, in the worst form, and that the Government were implicated. He therefore thought it high time that this Government should take some steps to show that they had not any participation in, but entirely repudiated, the disgraceful course followed in the Trans-Vaal. It had been reported, as the House had just heard, that not only did the Government wink at the existing slavery, but that the President himself and the Government officers owned some of those children; one of which officers, on being ordered by the Raad to restore fifty children who were in his possession, refused to give them up, and the Government could not enforce compliance with the order. He believed the higher classes residing in Mooi River district repudiated the Trans-Vaal system; but he had reason to know, and he acknowledged with shame and regret, that even some of our own countrymen are encouraging that system."

Mr. Robinson has given an accurate summary of the proceedings

of the meeting at Potchefstroom, the holding of which is a proof that things are so bad that humane men, in spite of the risk they run, feel compelled to speak out. Mr. Robinson's account of the disclosures made by the Volksraad's Commission requires to be dealt with somewhat more in detail. Zoutpansberg is one of the finest districts in South Africa: it has been the scene of many of the most barbarous raids of the Boers; it is the chief source of "the black ivory" trade, and the key to the traffic with the interior in ivory, ostrich feathers, and other valuable commodities. For years past this district has been the scene of constant warfare. In the end the tables have been turned, and the Boers have sustained a series of reverses. Owing to the military incompetence of their leaders as well as to the pusillanimity of some of the men and the disgust of others who have been pressed into the service, they have repeatedly been forced to retreat, and have seen some of their outlying settlements devastated and abandoned. In consequence of these reverses, the Volksraad appointed a Commission to institute an inquiry. Their report has been published in the *Trans-Vaal Argus*,* and it is no exaggeration to say that it convicts the Boers on their own testimony of having committed the very worst excesses. It appears that the government is represented at Zoutpansberg by several superintendents of native affairs, one of whom is a certain Signor Albasini, the Portuguese Consul, who is described as the evil genius of that part of the country. The great chief, Mozela, made a demand on Albasini for the delivery up to him of a lesser chief named Monene, whom he accused of having robbed some of his people. Although it was notorious that Mozela's purpose was to murder Monene, the Dutch authorities were quite prepared to surrender him, Mozela having prohibited elephant hunting in the district of Chinquini, until his enemy had been delivered into his hands. Monene was apparently fast in the grip of one Field Cornet Stephanus van Rensenburg, but he succeeded in making his escape, and after having fled from one tribe to another, found a refuge with the chief Swaas. The Boers, on his flight, with suicidal recklessness, turned their arms against various

* An interesting and courageous sheet, and the only newspaper published in the Republic.

tribes on the mere suspicion of their having sheltered him. For example : "Commander Venter states that he attacked Paco "and Lahotto because he had heard that Monene had taken refuge "there, but after having routed these chiefs, he discovered that "Monene had gone to Swaas." A commando was sent against Magor, another Kaffir chief, on the false pretext (so the Commissioners declare it to have been) that he was implicated in a plot to massacre the whites. "Magor was told to come down from the mountain and bring his taxes with him. Unless he came of his own accord he could not be reached ; but as his personal safety had been promised him, and relying as he did upon that promise, he came down from the mountain, thus placing himself in the lion's den, bringing his taxes with him, which consisted of between 200 and 300 head of cattle. No sooner, however had these taxes been secured, and the victim in their power, than he was placed in confinement, and the same night murdered, whilst his tribe was destroyed by those bloodhounds, the Knobnoses, who are exclusively under the command of Albasini, and ready at any time to carry out his orders, whatever their nature." Another victim was Tabaan (or Tabuna), who, it is said, regularly paid his taxes to the Government. He, too, was murdered, his cattle carried off, and the women and children of his tribe made captive. This is the mode by which the latter generally become destitute and are reduced to such straits that, according to the benevolent theories of Mr. Marthinus Wessel Pretorius, it is an act of charity to enslave them. The Commissioners offer strong testimony as to the complicity of the Government in these misdeeds, and as to their having successfully shielded the evil-doers against the punishment due to their offences. The Commission further alleges as the cause of the present deplorable state of Zoutpansberg, "that certain officials and officers, who have from time to time broken the law, by wilful neglect of duty, abuse of the power entrusted to them, and other misdemeanours, have not been punished for so doing, as also that by adopting a wrong course of treatment of the native tribes at that time both peaceable and subject to the Government, many of these Kaffir tribes at length became insubordinate."

It must not be supposed that these facts represent a condition of society which has passed away : on the contrary, the following letter

shows that the Boers are still obstinately pursuing their evil ways :—

“To the Editor of the *Transvaal Argus*.

“Potchefstroom, July 25, 1868.

“SIR,—The following particulars relative to the late commando may prove interesting to your readers : please therefore allow me the requisite space : they may be accepted as strictly in accordance with truth.

“I proceeded as the substitute of Mr. Johs. Maartens on the late commando, and, under orders of Commandant-General Paul Kruger, was engaged in the storming of Mapela's mountain. This we successfully accomplished, excepting his head town, which, although virtually taken by us, was at the same time, and in the hour of victory, abandoned, a precipitate and scandalous retreat taking place. I was wounded in the ear on the same day, and would have been left to my fate but for the bravery and humanity of Field Cornets Piet Venter and Gert Engelbrecht, who removed me to camp, and to whom, under Providence, I am indebted for my life. At the commencement of the storming of the mountain the Commandant-General on horseback gallantly led the attack, but at the last point, the little hill, he was not to be seen. After the shameful retreat a ‘Krygsraad (Council of War) was held, and I heard Piet Venter say that he was both willing and ready to storm the little hill ; but the whole commando refused to make the attempt. After this, the Commando left Mapela's, and went to Macapaan's poort. The Kaffirs, on our arrival there, hoisted a white flag, pretending to enter into negotiations for peace, but in reality for the purpose of gaining time, so as to remove the cattle.

“We then surrounded the hill for the purpose of cutting off the enemy from water, but which proved a complete failure ; and after having been there for about seventeen days the burghers would not remain any longer, but resolved to return home, and left on a Monday morning. On the previous Saturday night the President arrived in camp, but again left on the same Monday morning that the commando broke up.

“Commandant-General Kruger issued orders during the time that I was on commando, that no one was allowed to forward any letters except they had been previously perused by the respective officers of the men who had written those letters.

“At Machedem and Kallacal's (Macapaan's poort) firing was kept up day and night to no purpose, and without the slightest occasion : a good deal of ammunition was thus wasted, during all of which time (seventeen days) I do not think any one of the enemy got killed, and on our side not a man was even wounded.

“At Mapela’s a number of women and children came into the possession of the commando; the number, however, I am unable to state, nor do I know what afterwards became of them. We were well supplied with ammunition up to the time the commando left, when the surplus was handed over to the different field cornets. To the best of my knowledge and belief, not more than 100 Kaffirs were killed at Mapela’s. Most of the wounded men on our side were so wounded in their disgraceful retreat.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient Servant,

MICHAEL LYNCH.”

Mr. Michael Lynch does not know what became of the women and children. A correspondent of mine, writing from the Trans-Vaal territory on the 26th of August last, leaves little doubt as to their ultimate destination. He says that, for the present, they will remain in the hands of a friendly chief, but that when matters become a little more settled the Boers will go and fetch them, and make them slaves. He states that, besides these captives, other children were also taken. “An inquiry was instituted to ascertain whether the parents of these children were alive. Much to the disappointment of many of the officers who composed the krysgraad (council of war), the parents were discovered in a neighbouring kraal, and at a short distance from the camp; but this did not signify. It was alleged that the distance was too great to send the children to their parents. They will, therefore, either become ‘prisoners of war, or ‘destitute apprentices’—in reality, slaves.” The same correspondent calls my attention to a letter from a Dutch Boer, published in the *Trans Vaal Argus*, in which reference is made to the case of a native woman who was deliberately shot dead, that some ruffian might gain possession of her child, “who now falls under the class called ‘destitute,’ and as such becomes an apprentice or slave.”

The *Natal Mercury* of 18th of August adds this additional information:—

“There are other circumstances connected with this commando which fully account for the unwillingness with which the inhabitants engage in these expeditions. Of the two men reported as dead, one Van Eck is said to have been merely wounded in the leg, and aban-

done in that disabled state. It is not strange that the Kaffirs, on finding the poor wretch, dispatched him with their assegais. We are also told that Hans Steyn, formerly landdrost of Potchefstroom, was present during the assault upon the hill, and told the Boers that if they succeeded he would burn his Bible, as he then could no longer put any faith in it, as he did not think a just God could bestow his blessing on arms wielded in such a cause as they were then engaged in. This remark, we believe, would be echoed by many of the Boers, who are intelligent enough to see that such proceedings are opposed to the dictates and usages of humanity. Unfortunately, the less scrupulous in this, as in many cases, have the upper hand. Clever adventurers from other countries, not troubled by many moral scruples, have found in the Republic a safe haven, and a convenient sphere for the exercise of their wits and talents. We have reason to know that low-class Englishmen have been implicated in certain cases of atrocious cruelty and oppression, and the quicker intelligence, and greater audacity of these people overbear and intimidate the better-disposed but more quiet section of the population."

No wonder that the farmers in this region have "trekked" away from their homesteads; that the expenses of these miserable Commandoes have ruined the exchequer; that, in the language of a petition to the Volksraad, "whilst the mechanic is compelled to accept a pound note at twenty shillings, he has to pay it away for goods at one-third to one-half less;"* and that, in a word, the whole country is going down the hill.

It is manifest from these various statements, and from many others which might be quoted, that the Boers are constantly engaged in aggressive warfare with the natives, and that their kidnapping propensities have made them more savage than the savages—more ruthless than the native owners of the soil, whom they are doing their best to destroy or to enslave. It is equally clear that slavery is not an isolated practice, but is supported by all classes of the people, from the President down to the most uncouth Boer residing on the uttermost limits of civilization. It is therefore marvellous that Mr. Pretorius should have found it so easy to

* The Boers cannot say with Mrs. MacCandlish in "Guy Mannerling"—"As lang as siller's current folk maunna look ower nicely at what king's head's on't;" for neither silver nor gold has any place in the Trans-Vaal currency.

throw dust into the eyes of Sir Philip Wodehouse, and that Mr. Cardwell should have so readily acquiesced in that "do nothing" policy, which is not always honourable, because it is convenient. Upon this subject the *Natal Mercury* in its issue for June 23rd, makes these weighty and pertinent remarks:—

"Recently we published a correspondence between the Duke of Buckingham, Colonial Secretary, and the Aborigines' Protection Society, in which the following paragraph occurs:—'He desires to inform you that Sir P. Wodehouse expressed an opinion against interference, in the year 1865, on the particular case brought to light by Mr. Martin, and referred to in the memorial addressed by the Society to Lord Stanley in August last; but his Grace has satisfaction in apprising the Society that Sir P. Wodehouse, in the following year, on further facts coming to his knowledge, addressed vigorous remonstrances to the President of the Trans-Vaal Republic, against the practices which were alleged of kidnapping children, and holding them in long terms of apprenticeship, tending to their enslavement; and that of the President, in reply, announcing that legal proceedings had been taken against certain offenders, who had kidnapped children, and conveyed earnest assurances of the intention of his Government to suppress slave-dealing and slavery.'

"This wonderful assertion on the part of the chief local representative of that power, which assumes to itself the championship of the slave, and spends millions in preventing slavery, indicates profound ignorance or fatal prejudice. It is in keeping with the reply made to Mr. Martin's representations, to the effect that he—the High Commissioner—was quite at a loss to discover in what manner he could interfere with any prospect of success; and, under all the circumstances, he trusted the Natal Government would acquiesce in his desire to abstain from addressing Mr. Pretorius on the subject. Nor are we surprised when it is further added, that Mr. Cardwell, the then Colonial Minister, entirely concurred in this reply, and did not think it expedient that any action should be taken by the Government of Natal, or any steps taken calculated to revive controversy with the Portuguese Government, as this trade is partly carried on within the boundaries of the Portuguese settlements, which adjoin the Trans-Vaal Republic.

"Although the Natal Government had done all that it could to get these matters inquired into, the incredulity or apathy of the High Commissioner rendered their efforts futile. The Aborigines' Protection Society, having got wind of the circumstances, took the matter up, so far with the results that are known to our readers. It is more than probable that the co-operation of this Society at home will lead to the further enlightenment of the Home Authorities and public.

“So long as the Imperial authorities attach any credence to the words of a Government whose leading officials do not scruple to violate in their own person the treaty to which they are principals, the truth will never be known. President Pretorius and his chief officials are wholly unfit to be treated as the ministers of any other State would be dealt with. They have forfeited all right to the diplomatic usage of civilized nations. Before us lies a letter, dated Potchefstroom, 15th June, and written by a gentleman of undoubted credibility, in which the following remarkable sentence occurs :—‘I hope you will do all in your power, not only to put a stop to the system of apprenticeship, but also to get this country placed under British rule. Under a Boer Government it never will, nor ever can, prosper ; besides, we have over and over again forfeited the independence that has been permitted, by embarking in slavery, coupled with which there is a large majority already anxious for British rule. Not only must a stop be put to the present system, but we must also be deprived of the power to carry it on, which can only be done by planting the British flag here. Will it be believed, that, at the very time when the President quieted Sir Philip Wodehouse, inducing the latter to write as he did to the Secretary of State, and deluding the Aborigines’ Society in 1866, that he was taking steps to suppress slavery by appointing a Commission of Inquiry into the slave-hunting raids and outrages at Zoutpansberg ; will it be believed that this same President, who accompanied that expedition, actually brought back with him thirty-two of these little apprentices, or slaves. The truth, therefore, will not be known by communications with the Government of this State on the subject.’

“We are astonished to observe that the *Cape Advertiser and Mail* takes for gospel the assurances made by Mr. Pretorius to Sir Philip Wodehouse, and refers, in a sneering manner, to the ‘misrepresentations of well-meaning men, who delude themselves and others.’ Such a remark shows amazing ignorance. Mr. Martin’s statements were simply a plain description of what he had seen, heard and experienced in the Trans-Vaal, while the disclosures lately made at the public meeting in Potchefstroom, by the actual participants in these slave-hunting expeditions, put the facts beyond all doubt. In this instance, however, whatever mistake the Society may have made in other cases, its action is most necessary and justifiable.

“In again urging the appointment of such a Commission of Inquiry, we therefore maintain most strenuously that the movement should be made without reference to the Trans-Vaal authorities, or absolute dependence upon their acquiescence. The facts will flow in fast enough when once the people there feel that the British Government is moving. So long as the present Boer *régime* lasts, ‘persons of property,’ so we are assured, ‘dare not move for fear of having their property

confiscated.' Surely if it is worth England's while to lift a finger to check slavery elsewhere, it is worth her while to intervene in the Trans-Vaal. By extending her authority there, she could, without any appreciable expenditure, not only put down this vile internal system of murderous slave-holding, but tap the sources of the foreign slave-trade from the Portuguese ports on the East Coast, to watch which a squadron of war vessels is employed, at an immense annual expenditure, and with but partial results. Naught but utter obtuseness can prevent the Imperial authorities from making use of so splendid and rare an opportunity to advance the interests of civilization in Africa, and to put down that monster evil which she has made it her mission to extinguish."

Great Britain has assumed duties and responsibilities in South Africa which she cannot abandon. She cannot, with honour, cease to protect the natives whom she has conquered, and whose territories—so far as it has suited her own pleasure and interest—she has seized. From the time that she subjugated the Kaffirs and extended her dominion into the interior of that great continent, which is no longer a *terra incognita*, she came under a bond to impart to them a superior civilization. She had a perfect right to consult her own ideas of policy when the question simply was whether she should continue to recognise the Boers as subjects of the British Crown. But when she surrendered her sovereignty over her Dutch subjects she could not with justice withdraw her protecting arm from the native tribes when they were assailed by the lawless violence of men whom she had released from their allegiance. The fact that, in the treaties which she entered into with the two Dutch Republics, she directly stipulated with them that the enslavement of the coloured race should for ever be prohibited was in itself a recognition on her part of this paramount duty. The treaty has been shamelessly violated: it is her duty to enforce it, and to insist that the plighted words of nations shall not become "false as dicers' oaths." The Trans-Vaal Boers are in league with the Portuguese slave-traders on the East Coast. Together they foment those inter-tribal wars which are the great feeders of the external slave-trade, and make the European "soul merchant" a far more revolting being than the lowest type of the negro race. It is possible that Portugal may assist her accomplice to obtain a port in Delagoa Bay, but at present the Boers can only carry on their intercourse with the outer world through British territory.

We are masters of the sea, and masters also of those markets (at least of powder and shot) from which the Boers draw their supplies. Long ago Dr. Livingstone pointed out that we might soon bring the offenders to terms by prohibiting, under heavy penalties, the sale to them of arms and ammunition, or by declaring free trade in those articles as respects the natives, and no longer giving to the stronger party a monopoly of the means of destruction. It is probable that so extreme a measure would be unnecessary if England, in the person of her representative, the Governor of the Cape Colony, would only exert her moral influence on the side of justice. If the facts are denied, let Her Majesty's representative despatch a Commission of Inquiry to Potchefstroom, where abundant evidence to prove the truth of the allegations against the authorities and people of the Republic will be forthcoming. But the facts are not denied. The plea set up by the Boers is, that the children they enslave are destitute, and their enforced labour prompted by motives of humanity. The facts which the Boers conceal are, that the children have been made orphans by Dutch rifles, and that the Kaffir cattle (which might have supplied them with food) has been carried off to swell the colonial herds.

The discovery of gold in the country which lies beyond the north-west boundary of the Trans-Vaal Republic promises to revolutionize this region of Africa. If half that is said concerning the extent and productiveness of the new gold fields be true, the establishment of a British colony in a part of Africa hitherto known only to a few adventurous explorers, is a matter of absolute certainty. That gold is to be had on the banks of the Tatin (a tributary of the Limpopo) for the trouble of digging for it, is proved by the report of the miners who have already commenced operations; and it is equally certain that the quartz is unusually rich in the proportion of the precious metal which it will yield to machinery. It is true that the journey is 700 or 800 miles from Natal, but there are few perils to encounter by the way, and new and more direct routes will shortly be opened. It seems probable that gold exists in large quantities to the eastward and on other tributaries of the Limpopo. It is notoriously worked on a river called the Bepi, where the natives pound the quartz, and then convey the precious residuum to Sofala and barter it with the Portuguese for

cattle, beads and blankets. To Herr Mauch, the enterprising German traveller, belongs the credit of the immediate discovery of these gold-fields, but numerous old workings testify to the antiquity of the knowledge now newly regained. The Natal journals are enthusiastically of opinion that Sofala is identical with the Ophir of Solomon. One of them quotes Job—"Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks." Milton is also appealed to as to the locality of the famous port—

"And Sofala, thought Ophir, to the realm of Congo."

Tradition, however, only points to Sofala as it has pointed to Arabia, Malacca, and India. Herr Mauch has gone to explore the ancient ruins which are said to exist to the west of Sofala, and if the old story, that there is in that country a strong fortress of unknown origin and pre-historic antiquity, should prove to be well founded, he might chance to shed some light on the claim of Sofala to the honour of identity with the Ophir of the Bible. Be this as it may, the courageous German, like many contemporary travellers, is doing his best to wipe away the old reproach to which a great satirist gave witty expression :—

"Geographers in Afric maps
With savage pictures fill their gaps ;
And o'er uninhabitable downs
Place elephants for want of towns."

It is curious that, during a recent visit to Europe, Father Sabon, of Durban, discovered in one of the libraries of Paris a Jesuit Missionary work, in which the precise situation of the Victoria gold-fields is indicated.* But whether Sofala and Ophir are the same or not, it cannot be denied that the opening up of a gold region beyond Natal and the Trans-Vaal Republic marks a new era in the history of African civilization.

The manner in which Mr. President Pretorius received the intelligence of the discovery was characteristic. He at once issued a proclamation, annexing a vast tract of country, as far, indeed, to the north-west as Lake Ngami, and of course including the

* This statement is made by the *Natal Mercury*, a journal which is published in the town in which Father Sabon resides.

entire area in which the precious metal is likely to reward the patient labour of the digger. Sir Philip Wodehouse has asked Mr. Pretorius for an explanation, and the chiefs, whose territories are thus coolly taken possession of on paper, are even more entitled to an explanation. Nothing could more forcibly illustrate the temper of the Boers towards the natives than this proceeding. When Mr. Pretorius took up his pen to write his proclamation he probably had no more idea of there being a right and a wrong in the transaction than Ahab had when he laid hands on Naboth's vineyard. The Maories have a saying, that the European rat has already devoured the Maori rat, but the European rat in New Zealand is a creature of moderate appetite compared with the Trans-Vaal vermin.

Mr. Pretorius, however, is powerless to give effect to his proclamation, and its only result has been to expose the weakness and cupidity of the Boers. The British flag has been raised at the Victoria gold fields, and Macheng, the chief to whom the country belongs, has expressed his desire to have the benefit of British protection. His tribe—the Bamangwato—are said to be “a quiet and kindly people,” among whom “the traveller, the trader, and the hunter find no dangers and expect no heavy losses.” Macheng, in a letter to Sir Philip Wodehouse, invites His Excellency to come and occupy the gold country, and to govern the gold-diggers in the name of the Queen of England. He says that the Trans-Vaal Government, through Commandant Jan Viljoen, had desired him to hand over the district to the Republic, but that he had declined to consider these overtures until he had heard from Sir Philip. Macheng has a laudable fear of the Boers, and would greatly prefer to see English authority established in his gold fields. It is still more gratifying to know that our conduct towards the Kaffirs for many years past justifies the good opinion in which we are held by the Bechuana chief.*

* It may be regarded as a singular and, at the same time, a felicitous circumstance, that Macheng, after having been the prisoner of Moselekatze, the great chief of the Matabele, for sixteen years, was released, and returned to his own people, by the intervention of Mr. Moffat, the Missionary. It is therefore natural enough that Macheng should prefer the English to the Boers.

Mr. Robinson, in moving his resolution in favour of the abolition

It is perhaps as easy to exaggerate as it is to undervalue what are called "the signs of the times;" but it really seems as if events were now conspiring to realize the dream of a South-African confederation. Formerly the expansion of British power was inseparably associated with a levelling policy of annexation, and one stereotyped system of government. To find rich farms for needy colonists, and to rule the natives after a strictly British fashion, were the two ideas which filled the brains of even able administrators. The theory was, that the natives must either submit to be so governed or die, and, in fact, thousands of them actually preferred death to this sort of submission. Writing of a period by no means very remote, Lord Macaulay says:—"The only barbarian about whom there was no wish to have any information was the Highlander." The Kaffirs were regarded with a somewhat different manifestation of the same hateful prejudice. To prove that this feeling was hateful it is not necessary to paint the untutored savage in roseate hues. The Kaffirs, like the Highlanders, have a higher capacity for improvement than too many of the colonists suppose. It also unfortunately happened that many of the earlier rulers of the Cape, who were military men, took a professional view of these warlike tribes, and considered them as only fit to be food for powder. Old errors are passing away with the generation whose selfish purposes they served. Peace now reigns, as it has long reigned, on the British frontier. How much this is due to the efforts of men like Mr. Shepstone, the Native Secretary of Natal, and Mr. Charles Brownlee, the Gaika Commissioner, it would be hard to say; but these enlightened officials belong to a class of colonial statesmen who prefer to rule by reason rather

of the office of High Commissioner, mentioned another fact which illustrates the friendly disposition of the natives towards the English Government. "He had asked," he said, "whether any applications had recently reached the Government from native tribes living near the Limpopo, to be taken under British rule; and the Secretary for native affairs had stated in reply, that a powerful chief, who lived as far off as the Limpopo, had sent a relative, who had spent two years in making a minute investigation into the condition of our natives, and the bearing of our Government towards them; and that the result of that investigation had been a deputation from that Chief, praying that he and his people might be admitted to the same privileges as our natives, by being allowed to become subjects of our Government."

than by force, and who manage to avert danger by the keenness with which they scent it from afar, and by the promptitude and energy of their action. Great Britain is now sometimes magnanimous as well as just; for it is not too much to affirm, that by her timely interference on behalf of the Basutos and the devoted French Missionaries in Basutoland she has prevented the torch of Christianity from being extinguished in a heathen land, and, at the same time, saved many thousands of natives from enslavement or extermination. In Natal, since the Zulus were beaten in open fight, the colonists have been at peace with the natives, and the latter have, in their turn, exhibited an amenability to restraint, and a willingness to labour, which might have taught the Boers a useful lesson if they had been willing to learn. To unite the diverse tribes and communities of South Africa in one confederation may appear a Quixotic enterprise, but the attempt is worth the best efforts of the wisest statesmanship we can command. It will, however, prove impracticable if, without regard to differing circumstances, the whole country is sought to be governed on one model. The wise ruler will endeavour to discover the means by which English, Dutch, and native institutions may continue in operation while the authority of British law and the supremacy of the Crown are inflexibly maintained. It would take time and patience, and great administrative skill, to carry out so great an undertaking, but the achievement would be worthy of many trials and sacrifices.

At present the functions of the Governor of the Cape Colony as High Commissioner are as anomalous as those of a French Minister might be who attempted to regulate the affairs of the Algerian frontier without the intervention of a Governor-General. Living a thousand miles from Natal, his knowledge of what is going on in the Trans-Vaal Republic is ignorance itself, as compared with the information which is constantly within the reach of the officials and people of that colony. He is also otherwise hampered in the discharge of his important functions. Sir Philip recently expressed his inability, for want of funds, to send an agent to the gold-fields, the discovery of which has occasioned so much stir among the white populations of South Africa; and even if the Natal legislature found the means, it is doubtful whether the Government of that colony would not exceed its powers if it des-

patched an embassy on its own account. It is therefore not surprising that the people of Natal should be dissatisfied, and their legislature prompt to give expression to the public discontent. The resolutions passed by the Legislative Council on the 10th of August are so important that it is necessary to give them *in extenso* :—

“ 1. That in the opinion of this House the office of High Commissioner, as exercised at present in relation to this colony, is inimical to the maintenance of the prestige and influence of Her Majesty's Government amongst the native tribes of South-East Africa, and the House is guided to this conclusion by the following considerations :—

“ a. The High Commissioner, as Governor of the Cape Colony, resides at Capetown, which is about 700 miles from the northern frontier of the Eastern Province, where alone independent native tribes are to be met with.

“ b. That Natal is surrounded on three sides by territories chiefly occupied by large and powerful independent tribes, with whom the local authorities cannot deal irrespective of the consent of the High Commissioner at Capetown.

“ c. That in times of disturbance amongst the surrounding communities, the Government of Natal is deprived of that power of timely and effectual action which it might otherwise exercise with great benefit to the interests of peace and civilization.

“ d. That ever since the annexation of the Orange River Sovereignty (since abandoned) in 1848, the emigrant farmers who settled over the Vaal River, and formed a Government of their own, under the style of the South-African Republic, have carried on a system of slavery, under the guise of child-apprenticeship—such children being the result of raids carried on against native tribes, whose men are slaughtered, but whose children and property are seized, the one being enslaved and sold as ‘ apprentices,’ the other being appropriated.

“ e. That in 1862 this system of slavery was brought to the notice of the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State by Lieutenant-Governor Scott, in the form of a statement made by a Bushman woman named Leya, who had been captured and enslaved by the Boers of the Trans-Vaal Republic, but no steps were then taken to put an end to the practice in question.

“ f. That on the 25th April 1865, Lieutenant-Governor Maclean forwarded to the High Commissioner a statement made by Mr. W. Martin, of Maritzburg, dated June 1st, 1865, in which clear and positive evidence, acquired during two visits to the country in 1852 and 1864, was given at length, and in which

certain wrongs suffered by the writer, in direct contravention of the treaty entered into between Her Majesty's Special Commissioners, Hogge and Owen, in 1852, were set forth.

- “g. That the existence of this system of slavery, attended as it is by indescribable atrocities and evils, is a notorious fact to all persons acquainted with the Trans-Vaal Republic; that these so-called ‘destitute children,’ are bought and sold under the denomination of ‘black ivory;’ that these evils were fully admitted by persons officially cognizant of them at a public meeting held in Potchefstroom, the chief town of the Republic, in April 1868, and that the whole subject has been brought fully under the notice of the High Commissioner.
- “h. That the following reply was sent to Lieutenant-Governor Maclean by the High Commissioner:—‘I can assure you that I fully sympathize with you in your anxiety to put a stop to what is so strongly described by Mr. Martin, but I am really quite at a loss to discover in what manner I could interfere with any prospect of success. There can scarcely be a doubt that the President, if referred to, would strenuously deny the existence of such traffic. A *bona fide* inquiry would be almost impracticable, and, moreover, it would be beyond the power of the Trans-Vaal Republic, admitting it to have the inclination, to put down a trade which the Boers must find to be very tempting and profitable. Under all the circumstances, I trust that you will, on further consideration, be prepared to acquiesce in my desire to abstain from addressing Mr. Pretorius on the subject.’
- “i. That as a *bona fide* inquiry to be instituted by the Government of the Trans-Vaal Republic would be, under the circumstances, ‘quite impracticable,’ it is highly important that Her Majesty's Government should take other steps to ascertain the truth, and to put a stop to a trade which, however ‘tempting and profitable to the Boers,’ is a direct breach of the treaty entered into with Her Majesty's Commissioners, is an outrage on humanity and civilization, and is an aggravation of the traffic which Her Majesty's Government has so long sought to suppress upon the East Coast.
- “j. That so long as this traffic in children is suffered to exist, there can be little hope for the progress of civilization amongst the native tribes living in the Trans-Vaal Republic, while the prevalence of such practices in the immediate neighbourhood of independent and colonial tribes, has a most pernicious and injurious effect, and tends to lower the position and influence of the whole race.

“k. That it is impossible for the High Commissioner, living as he does so far from the scene of these atrocities, to judge clearly and fully their character and tendencies; but it would be in the power of the Government of Natal, had it the right to act, to interfere in the matter, without entailing any troublesome or costly implications on the Home Government.

“l. That the state of peace which the colony of Natal has enjoyed ever since its establishment, combined with the constant recognition here of all the just rights and claims of the natives, have secured for the local government the confidence of the neighbouring independent tribes, and would enable the representatives of Her Majesty's authority here, were they freed from the control of the High Commissioner, to exercise a most salutary and beneficent influence over the natives of South-Eastern Africa.

“2. That a respectful address be presented to the Lieutenant-Governor, forwarding copy of above resolution; and praying His Excellency to transmit the same to the Right Honourable the Secretary, of State for the Colonies for his consideration, together with copies of all documents bearing upon the subject.”

Seldom have resolutions passed by a Colonial Assembly surpassed these in the gravity of their statements, or of the issues which they raise. It cannot, for a moment, be tolerated, that while a costly squadron is vainly striving to suppress the slave trade on the East Coast of Africa the traffic should be allowed to continue unchecked, and without an effort being made to put it down in a country whose right to enjoy a separate Government is contingent on the fidelity with which it abstains from the practice of slavery and slave-trading.

Of still greater importance are the resolutions in favour of the annexation to Natal of the Free State and the Trans-Vaal, which were adopted by the House of Assembly on the 19th of August last:—

“1st. That the interests of the two South-African British Colonies, viz. the Cape Colony and Natal, are in many respects so closely united with the Republics situated on their several borders, that a union of these under British rule can scarcely fail to conduce to the material welfare of the whole, both as a means of promoting an interchange of friendly relations amongst them, as well as of providing, by judicious combination, for their adequate security and confidence in time

of danger; and establishing and regulating commercial intercourse on a permanent and satisfactory basis, to all parties.

- “2nd. That the comparative dependence of these Republics on the Cape Colony and Natal, together with the similarity of the religion, laws and customs of the white inhabitants, to those of the same classes inhabiting the two latter colonies, favours the belief, that sooner or later they will be desirous of coming under the dominion of the British Government.
- “3rd. That the Council is therefore of opinion, that with a view to furthering the objects above set forth, it would be highly desirable for Her Majesty’s Government favourably to consider any proposal which the authorities of these Republics, being empowered thereto by the inhabitants, may put forward, affecting their annexation to either the Cape Colony or Natal, or embracing suggestions with respect to any other form of allied or separate administration deemed suitable by the majority of the white inhabitants of such States.
- “4th. That a respectful address be presented to the Lieutenant-Governor, transmitting to His Excellency copy of the above resolutions, and requesting His Excellency to forward the same to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, for the favourable consideration of Her Majesty’s Government.”

These resolutions, of course, raise a very large and momentous question—one which cannot be decided superficially or by theoretical considerations, however reasonable. One thing is certain, that a Federal union will not meet with the approval of the statesmen of this country, unless it be self-supporting; and this, therefore, is a point to which its advocates should at once direct their attention. There is good reason to believe that the movement proceeds from within as well as from without; that a powerful party in both Republics are tired of Commandoes, sick of the ruinous insecurity of their position, alarmed at the moral deterioration of their own race, disgusted with the brutalities of the Boers of the old school. While I write, details of more recent outrages—massacres committed in cold blood for the sake of plunder—have reached me. Neither the British Government nor its representatives can remain passive spectators—accomplices both before and after the fact—of these murderous deeds. Let the decision on the

larger question be what it may, it is impossible that any European community in South Africa can be permitted to build up the institution of slavery in territories which are within the jurisdiction, or subject to the just influence of Great Britain.

I am sure that the sentiments to which I have given expression will meet with your concurrence, and that in the new House of Commons you will, in concert with Mr. Buxton, Mr. Torrens, Mr. Hughes, and other members of the Society, continue to assist a cause which has already had many substantial proofs of your sympathy.

I am, my DEAR SIR,

Yours very faithfully,

F. W. CHESSON.

London, 1st December 1868.



